The Cleveland Museum of Art Announces New Acquisitions

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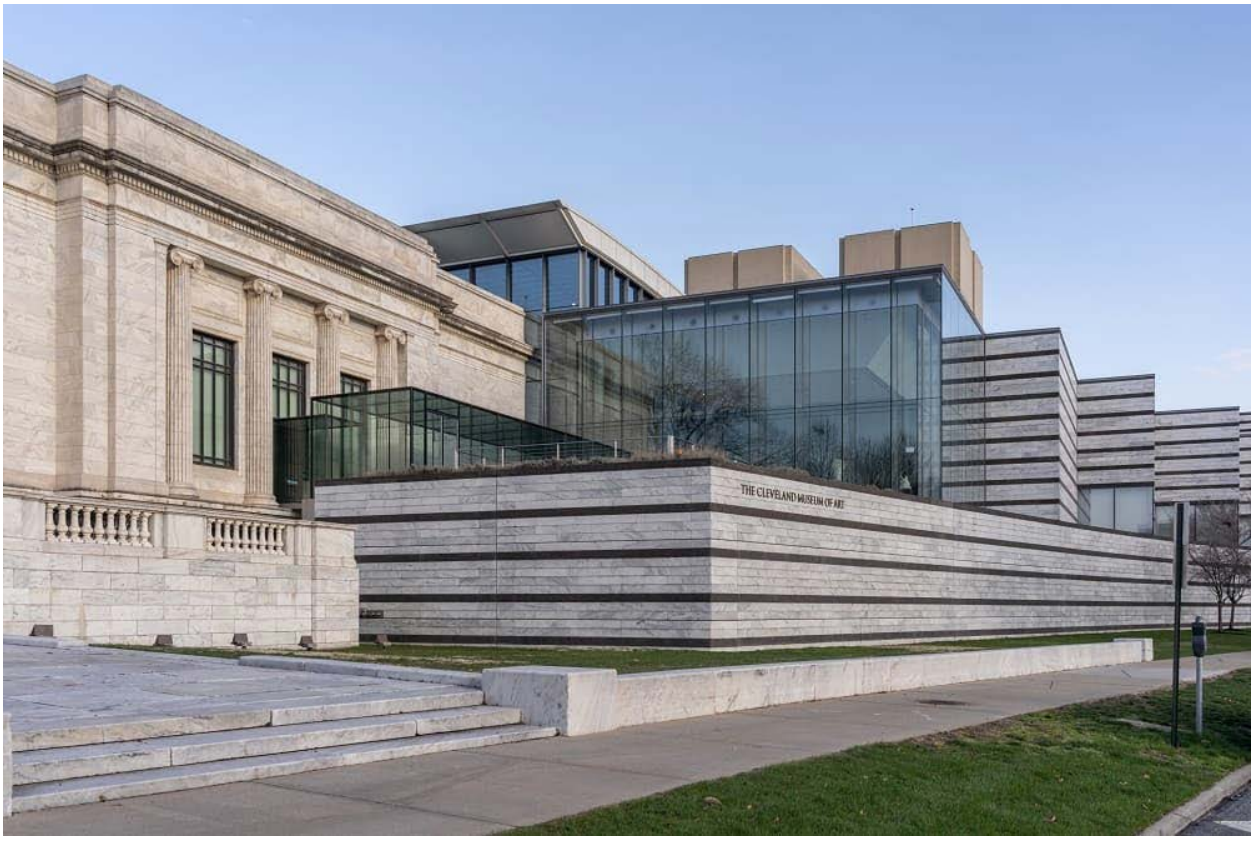

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Works include a major work by Park Seo Bo, a clay sculpture by a Native American artist Rose B. Simpson, old master drawings, and Japanese porcelain, adding to the CMA's respected permanent collection

Cleveland (July 25, 2023)—Recent acquisitions by the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) include ***Écriture No. 22-77*** by Park Seo Bo (박서보), a pioneer in Korean postwar abstraction; a clay sculpture by Rose B. Simpson, a contemporary Native American artist; drawings by Dutch artist Jacob de Wit and British artist Richard Cosway; and five Nabeshima porcelain dishes from the province of Hizen in Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island.

Écriture No. 22-77, Park Seo Bo (박서보)

Major Work of Korean Postwar Abstraction

Écriture No. 22-77, 1977. Park Seo Bo 박서보 (Korean, b. 1931). Pencil and oil on hemp cloth;
130.2 x 195.3 cm (51 1/4 x 76 7/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2023.48

Écriture No. 22-77 by Park Seo-Bo (Korean, b. 1931) is a masterpiece of Dansaekhwa, one of the most important movements in postwar Korean art. Park is widely regarded as the father of Dansaekhwa, due in a large part to his development in the 1960s and 70s of the Écritures series to which this painting belongs. Created in 1977 during this initial period of invention, Écriture No. 22-77 is a quintessential representative of Park's focus on restrained monochromatic abstraction.

Born in 1931, Park Seo Bo grew up under Japanese colonial rule. After serving in the Korean War in the early 1950s, he graduated from Hongkik University's prestigious painting department. He began his career making works of Korean Informel Art, considered the first radical artistic experiment in postwar Korea, not only because it abandoned representational art in favor of complete abstraction, but also because it initiated a collective rebellion against the government-sponsored National Art Exhibition. In these

works, which Park recalls his experiences of war, he built up dense, impastoed surfaces through aggressive gestures and forceful swaths of color.

It was, however, through a radically different paradigm, manifested in the Écritures, that Park came into his own. According to the artist, this shift was catalysed in 1967 by a revelation he had while watching his three-year-old attempt to write a word inside a grid. Growing frustrated by his failure to fit within the lines, his son abandoned his initial pursuit, instead creating his own form of writing, a kind of repetitive scribbling.

Adapting this example of inventing a personal language, Park left behind image and color, and replaced the unique expressive gesture with a recurring predetermined mark. He also gave primacy to the pencil over the paintbrush, which he began using to make straight angled incisions in multiple wet coats of off-white, gray, and pale-yellow oil paint. As Park added pencil marks, paint was removed. The artist considers his technique to be one of partial erasure. As demonstrated in ***Écriture No. 22-77***, the result of this process is a dynamic, textured surface that seems to vibrate when viewed up close. This major acquisition for both the museum's contemporary and Korean art collections, will make its public debut in the Korea Foundation Gallery (October 2023–January 2024).

Heights III, Rose B. Simpson
Hand-molded sculpture emphasizes importance of passing Indigenous traditions to future generations

Heights III, 2022. Rose B. Simpson (Santa Clara Pueblo, b. 1983). Clay, steel, twine, grout, and beads from bone, wood, lava, trade glass, pyrite, and stone; 160 x 44.5 x 43.2 cm (63 x 17 1/2 x 17 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Trust, 2023.49

Rose B. Simpson's sculpture, ***Heights III***, is the first contemporary Native American sculpture to be acquired by the museum. Simpson belongs to a long lineage of women from Santa Clara Pueblo (Khaʾpʾoe Ówîngeh), famous for producing blackware and redware pottery that dates back hundreds of years. By creating ceramic figures—as opposed to the traditional clay vessels marketed to tourists and ousiders, for which ceramic artists in the region are best known—her work represents a bold intervention in colonial legacies of dependency, erasure, and assimilation. She does so via a medium—clay—that has deeply rooted ancestral foundations.

This acquisition is a self-portrait of the artist holding her daughter. The bridge-like forms linking their heads recall the artist's concern with passing along foundational Indigenous traditions to her child as she grows up. The mother-and-child subject is one of Simpson's most iconic sculptural motifs, but she rarely creates them on this scale. The black clay she uses here recalls traditional Pueblo black pottery. As is typical of the artist's works, this work is exquisitely sculpted, showing traces of hand-molding throughout the surface. The arms of the figures are missing, replaced instead with handles, symbolizing their likeness to double-handled, ceramic vessels.

***Jupiter (in the guise of Diana) and Callisto*, Jacob de Wit**
Work on paper displays draftsmanship of respected painter

Jupiter (in the guise of Diana) and Callisto, 1733. Jacob de Wit (Dutch, 1695–1754). Black chalk, pen and ink, brown and gray wash, watercolor, gouache, white heightening, and brown ink framing lines; sheet: 44.5 x 30.8 cm (17 1/2 x 12 1/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Norman O. Stone and Ella A. Stone Memorial Fund, 2023.45

A highly finished drawing by Jacob de Wit, ***Jupiter (in the guise of Diana) and Callisto*** uses a combination of pen and ink, gouache, and watercolor to tell this well-known story from Ovid's Metamorphosis. Visiting Arcadia, Jupiter lusts after one of Diana's followers, Callisto, and seduces her in the guise of Diana. De Wit portrayed the seduction scene; Jupiter's eagle, lurking behind Diana's quiver of arrows, signifies his presence. Meanwhile, Diana and her hunters pursue a stag in the background. The putti, who attempt to shield—or perhaps reveal—the affair with a red textile, create a cascading rhythm to the left of the figural group, joined by a group of curious, elegant hunting dogs.

The large, finished drawing relates to two paintings originally meant for the walls of a merchant's house in Amsterdam. De Wit was among the most sought-after painters in 18th-century Amsterdam, where he made his living producing large paintings on commission, intended to be inset into the walls and ceilings for the city's stately canal homes. Several years after he made the paintings, another Amsterdam merchant, Jonas Witsen, commissioned him to make this and another drawing based on the original schemes. As decorative tastes changed, many of De Wit's large residential paintings were destroyed, and therefore such drawings play an important role in documenting De Wit's large-scale commissions as well as his thriving business as an independent draftsman.

***Sidi Hadji Abdurrahman Adja and Two Veiled Young Women*, Richard Cosway**
Drawings of an ambassador in London and his wives derive from a fashionable salon held by the artist and his wife

Sidi Hadji Abdurrahman Adja (1720–1792), 1786. Richard Cosway (British, 1742–1821). Graphite, watercolor, red chalk on paper; sheet: 44.5 x 30.8 cm (17 1/2 x 12 1/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.46

Two Veiled Young Women, probably Lilla Amnani and her sister, 1786. Richard Cosway (British, 1742–1821). Graphite, watercolor, red chalk on paper; sheet: 44.5 x 30.8 cm (17 1/2 x 12 1/8 in.).
The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.47

Richard Cosway, a prolific painter in London at the end of the 18th century best known for his portrait miniatures, was also a talented sketch artist making mementos called “tinted drawings” on commission and as personal exercises. These two drawings, which have always remained together, derive from the fashionable London Salon hosted by Cosway

and his wife, Maria. The male figure has been identified as the ambassador from Tripoli, Sidi Hadji Abdurrahman Adja (1720–1792), who visited London in 1786. His striking appearance garnered great attention at public events, where remarks centered around his venerable beard, tall stature, and golden robes. He became friends with the artist's wife, Maria Cosway, and likely received an invitation to the couple's salon, thus providing the opportunity for Richard Cosway to capture this fleeting likeness.

The female sitters wear less specific attire, a combination of vaguely Ottoman robes with more typically Greek headdresses, of the type Cosway might have known from costume books. The generalized costumes have led scholars to propose that they are imagined portraits of Abdurrahman's two wives, who did not accompany him to London, but whose story had appeared in a published description that circulated at the time. According to the account, Abdurrahman Adja had two wives who were sisters (the older named Lilla Amnani), whom he had purchased at a slave market in Greece and who had risen to high rank at the Tripolitan court. Richard Cosway's pairing of the two portraits—one from life, one imaginary—suggests the kind of novelistic intrigue that fascinated 18th-century British audiences.

Series of Nabeshima Porcelain Dishes from the Province of Hizen in Kyushu, Japan
Considered the finest Japanese porcelain ever produced

Small Dish (Kozara) with Barbed Rim and Stylized Floral Panels, c. 1670. Japan, Edo period (1615–1868). Porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze color enamel (Hizen ware, Nabeshima type); diam. 14.9 cm (5 7/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.40

Molded Dish with Stylized Keyfret Design, mid-1600s. Japan, Edo period (1615–1868). Porcelain with molding and overglaze color enamel (Hizen ware, Matsugatani kilns, Nabeshima type); 12 x 16.2 cm (4 4/5 x 6 3/8 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.41

Molded Dish with Fireworks Design, late 1600s. Japan, Edo period (1615–1868). Porcelain with underglaze blue and green glaze (Hizen ware, Nabeshima type); diam. 15.2 cm (6 in). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.42

Small Dish (Kozara) with Everted Rim and Wave and Reed Design, late 1600s. Japan, Edo period (1615–1868). Porcelain with underglaze blue and green glaze (Hizen ware, Nabeshima type); diam. 15.2 cm (6 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.43

Small Dish (Kozara) with Baskets and Cherry Blossoms Design, c. 1670–1710. Japan, Edo period (1615–1868). Porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze color enamel (Hizen ware, Nabeshima type); diam. 14.6 cm (5 3/4 in.). The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2023.44

This group of five Nabeshima porcelain dishes was made between the mid-17th and early 18th centuries. Produced by the best ceramists in Japan located on Kyushu, Japan's southernmost island, Nabeshima ware was made as tribute for the Shogun in Edo (present-day Tokyo) and as gifts for daimyo, in the Shogun's entourage.

Considered the finest Japanese porcelain ever produced, Nabeshima ware represents the pinnacle of Japanese aesthetics produced in the medium. Such porcelain dishes were created with a cultured Japanese audience in mind and were not circulated outside of Japan until the late 19th century. Diverse in design, Nabeshima ware took advantage of the most advanced technical achievements in porcelain. This group of dishes—which would have been used to serve side dishes that accompany meals in Japan—are decorated with subjects as varied as fireworks, cherry blossoms in baskets, and reeds and waves.